

1139
523
Covenants

87

By the King.



Hereas wee haue euer since it pleased God to establish vs in the Imperiall Crowne of Great Britaine, equally regarded the good of both the late Kingdomes of Scotland and England, now happily vnited in our Royal person in one Monarchie, euer minding to maintaine and continue the good and lovable customes and Lawes whereby each of them hath bene these many ages so worthily gouerned: neuerthelesse some malicious spirits, enemies to that common tranquillitie so much desired by vs (forgetting the many proofes both publique and priuate, which we haue giuen of that our gracious affection to that our native and ancient countrey of North Britaine, of the freedome, libertie and priuiledges whereof wee haue at all occasions taken so speciall a patrociny, as the solemne assemblies of the Estates of South Britaine, and Commissioners from the Estates of both Kingdomes haue bene eye witnesses) haue not bene ashamed to labour to pervert the mindes of our best affected subiects, That whereas the insolent and factious carriage of some of them hath merited most seuerer animaduersion, they would insinuate themselves in the commiseration of the multitude, by assuming vnto them a glorious profession of the maintaining of the priuiledges and auctorized discipline, intended by vs (as they affirme) to be vtterly ouerthrowne by a sudden and vnseasonable laying vpon them at this present the Rites, Ceremonies, and whole Ecclesiasticall order established in the Church of this part of our Kingdome of Britaine. And as wee haue euer carefully regarded how conuenient it is to maintaine euery Countrey in that forme of gouernment which is fittest and can best agree with the constitution thereof, and how dangerous alterations are without good aduice and mature deliberation, and that euen in matters of order of the Church, in some small Ilands vnder our Dominions, we haue abstained from suffering any alteration: So doubt we not, but our good Subiects will neuer be that credulous contrary to the knowne trueth, which hath euer appeared clearly in all our Actions, as to be in any doubt, but as in all our proceedings wee haue bene a Patrone of Religion and Justice, (two inseparable conseruers of all Monarchies,) So hath all our study and care euer bene to retrench and reforme all courses that caried any prejudice to that integritie whereat wee haue euer aymed, and as by so many good Lawes set forth in our gouernment, Justice hath attained to another perfection and splendor, then it had in any our predecessors times, and with painefull and vnpleasant businesse, wee haue in the discipline of the Church taken away innumerable abuses and corruptions, which if they had not bene remedied, had brought the puritie of Religion in extream danger. Yet wee hope that none dare be so impudent as to affirme that by our Soueraigne power, or absolute commandement we did the same (although wee enioyed our auctoritie as freely as any King or Monarch of the world) but as the disease of the Ciuill body was euer cured by the aduise of our three Estates, So the defects of the Church by the helpe and counsell of those who had greatest interest in them, So as the presumption of our by-gone actions in our administration, whyles wee were present, the prooue of our fatherly care towards this part of our Kingdome since our residence here, may be sufficient to secure vs against all such malicious calumniationes. And how euer in rule of pollicie wee cannot but iudge it conuenient that two estates so inseparably conioyned, should be drawen to as great conformitie in all things as the good of both may permit; And that no Monarchie either in Ciuill or Ecclesiasticall pollicie hath yet attained to that perfection, that it needs no reformation, or that infinite occasions may not arise whereupon wise Princes will foresee for the benefite of their States, iust cause of alteration: Yet are wee and haue euer bene resolved, not to make any sudden or hasty change in the gouernement of that part of our Kingdome, either Ciuill or Ecclesiasticall, but with graue aduice and consent of our Estates, and the wisest and best sort of them whom it most properly concernes, much lesse to trouble them with any vnecessary alteration of indifferent and Ceremoniall matters, and that vpon such foreseene aduantages, and preuention of confusion and euill to come, as the greatest enemies of all Peace, obedience to Princes, and order in all governments shall not obtrude any inconuenient to the contrary. And as by Gods holy assistance, wee haue drawne that part of our Kingdome out of infinite troubles, factions, and cruell barbarities, and reduced the vttermost borders and confines thereof to Gods obedience, and acknowledging of our Lawes; (an Estate neuer heard of before, since this Iland hath bene inhabited) So by the same diuine providence and our fatherly care ouer the whole Iland, wee intend to transmit the same in good order, happy quietnesse, and flourishing pollicie to that posteritie wherewith God hath blessed vs, and after them to the worlds end; Like as for the more verification of our Honourable intention, and to stop the mouthes of these vnquiet spirits, raisers of that false scandall of alteration, we haue appointed a generall assembly to be holden at Dundee the last Tuesday of July, wherent we expect reparation of those disorders in so farre as belongeth to their censure, and to be freed in time comming of all such calumnies.

Giuen at our Honour of Hampton Court the 26. day of September, in the third yeere of our Reigne of Great Britaine, France and Ireland.

Anno Dom. 1605.

God saue the King.

95

Imprinted at London by Robert Barker,
Printer to the Kings most Excellent Maestie. 1605.